



**For immediate release**

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For more information:

Michelle Avdienko

360-254-2866

[Michelle.Avdienko@Touchmark.com](mailto:Michelle.Avdienko@Touchmark.com)

## **Therapeutic gardening sprouting at Touchmark**

VANCOUVER, Wash. — Whether it's snowing or sunny outside, residents living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia at Touchmark at Fairway Village now have the opportunity to spend time gardening indoors, day and night, no matter the weather. Touchmark is the first retirement community in Clark County to partner with Eldergrow™ and offer this unique experience.

"We are delighted to be working with Eldergrow and offering residents this indoor, elevated garden box along with regular garden-centered activities," says Touchmark Vice President of Clinical Services Wendy Schrag, RN-BC.

Schrag first saw Eldergrow at a conference and instantly knew the benefits it would provide to those with advancing dementia.

"Gardening is a favorite hobby for many people," she says. "It connects with people on so many levels and is a very rewarding activity offering numerous benefits."

Among the benefits are improved motor skills and self-esteem, normalized sleeping patterns, enhanced mood, reduced disorientation and decreased risk of falling.

Master Gardener Becky Plourde is an Eldergrow Educator who will be working with Touchmark residents. She points out that because gardening connects with people's senses — sight, smell, touch, sound and taste — it is an especially enriching activity for people living with memory loss.

Fay Holbrook sowed the first plant in Touchmark's new garden, recalling that she and her husband used to garden all the time in their Kentucky home.

After planting mint, Andy Anderson noted he has liked gardening since he was a child. Growing dahlias was one of his favorite pastimes. "Gardening makes you happy," he says.

Shirley Wamgold also is a longtime garden and thinks Eldergrow is a great idea. She, too, says digging in the dirt and caring for plants "makes you happy." Her daughter, Marcie, agrees. "My mom loves gardening, and I love it when I see her getting

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pleasure from something. This new indoor garden gives me goosebumps; it's so amazing."

The indoor garden box features a grow light connected to a timer that provides the optimal spectrum of red and blue light. A fan runs constantly, which keeps away pests and aids in water evaporation. A watering chart helps make sure plants are not overwatered.

Residents tend to an assortment of plants that provide various sensory features, such as firm foliage, fuzzy leaves, edible herbs, pretty blooms and more. Twice a month, Plourde leads a culinary or craft activity incorporating the plants.

Those interested in learning more about the benefits of the Eldergrow garden at Touchmark can call 360-254-2866.

### **About Eldergrow**

Eldergrow offers residents a therapeutic connection to nature through innovative gardening products and services. The mobile sensory garden brings nature inside, and educators teach evidence-based, therapeutic horticulture classes that engage residents physically, socially, cognitively, creatively and sustainably.

### **About Touchmark at Fairway Village**

Touchmark at Fairway Village is a full-service retirement community offering a wide range of homes, lifestyle options and services, including an on-site Health & Fitness Club featuring state-of-the-art equipment and indoor pool and spa. Membership in the Club is open to anyone 50 years and better. More information is available at [Touchmark.com](https://www.touchmark.com).

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